REMARKS

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested. Claims 1-8 and 31-41 are currently pending, with claims 1, 2, 32, 39 and 40 being the independent claims. The Applicant respectfully submits that these amendments and the new claim introduce no new matter. Moreover, the Applicant respectfully requests that these amendments be entered as they place the application in a condition for allowance. Based on the above Amendments and the following Remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all outstanding rejections.

Interview Summary

The undersigned appreciates the time and attention extended by Examiner Neurauter during the telephonic interview conducted on May 22, 2008 with the undersigned and Jennifer Volk. During the interview, the 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, rejections were discussed. Additionally, the Applicant proposed claim amendments to distinguish over "Teach Yourself Microsoft Project 2000 in 24 hours" ("*Project 2000*"). The Examiner agreed that such clarifications appeared to distinguish over *Project 2000*, but indicated that further examination may be needed.

Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 1-8, 31 and corresponding dependent claims 33-35 and 37-38 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over

claim 2 of U.S. Patent No. 5,978,836.

Applicants will file an appropriate Terminal Disclaimer upon indication of allowable subject matter in the application to the extent that the double patenting rejections are maintained in light of the foregoing amendments to the claims.

The Claims Distinctly Claim the Subject Matter

Claims 39-41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner raises arguments with respect to four claim terms, each of which are addressed separately below.

"step field"

Independent claims 39 and 40 recite "compare a step field of the email with the route" and "update the step field to the next step." The Examiner takes the position that it is unclear "whether the step field is within the email or within or part of some other element." Office Action, pp. 5-6.

As illustrated by the example shown in FIG. 6, an email (66) can include a step control field (69), To and From address fields (67), and a message body (68). The email (66) can be passed between the form route manager and recipients such that the step control field (69), address fields (67) and/or the message body (68) can be updated or changed within the email (66). Thus, it is clear that the step field is within the email.

"the next step"

The Examiner also takes the position that it is unclear "where this 'next step' is generated, received from, or otherwise disseminated in order to determine this 'next step'." Office Action, pp. 5-6. Additionally, the Examiner asserts that "the next step" has insufficient antecedent basis. Office Action, p. 6.

As recited in independent claims 39 and 40, the form route manager uses a route having a "sequence of email addresses." For example, Figure 6 shows an example of a route 610 (see also paragraph [0068]). As illustrated in the example shown in the table in paragraph [0068], each email address of the route can be associated with a step in the route. Page 4, [0068]. When the form route manager receives an email having an email address in the route, the form route manager determines "if the email is sent from an email address that is the last step in the route." Page 4, [0064]. If it is not the last step, the form route manager sets the step field of the email to the next step in the route, sets the email address "to the email address of the next step in the route," and sends the email to the next email address. Page 4, [0064]. Thus, it is clear that the next step is determined by the form route manager.

Regarding the Examiner's opinion that "the next step" has insufficient antecedent basis, the Applicant notes that independent claims 39 and 40 recite "a route comprising a step-by-step sequence of email addresses." The "step-by-step sequence" implicitly includes a plurality of steps, each of which is associated with an email address. As such, the "next step" would be an inherent component of the "step-by-step sequence." *See* MPEP 2173.05(e) (stating "inherent components of elements recited have antecedent basis in the recitation of the components themselves"). Thus, the claim recitation "the next step" has sufficient antecedent basis.

"the email"

Independent claims 39 and 40 recite "compare a step field of the email with the route." The Examiner takes the position that it is unclear "what email the limitation 'the email' is referring to." Office Action, p. 6. Additionally, the Examiner asserts that "the email" has insufficient antecedent basis. Office Action, p. 6.

Independent claims 39 and 40 recite "a form route manager for sending and receiving email" and then later recite "compare a step field of the email with the route." The "email" recited with the "compare" is the same email being sent and received by the form route manager albeit with potentially different values such as the step control field, the address fields, and/or the message body. Thus, "the email" is the same email and has sufficient antecedent basis.

Independent claims 39 and 40 additionally recite "an outbox adapted to send email ... wherein the email includes a project control field..." The Examiner takes the position that it is unclear "whether this "email" is either a newly recited email or is [referring] to the above recited email." Office Action, p. 6. Similarly, the Examiner asserts that that this "email" has insufficient antecedent basis. Office Action, p. 6.

As illustrated by the example shown in FIG. 25, an email can further include a project control field (251), and as discussed above, the email being passed between recipients can be the same email albeit with different values. The "email" recited with the "outbox" is the same email recited with "a project control field." Thus, "the email" is the same email and has sufficient antecedent basis.

"the next email address"

Independent claims 39 and 40 recite "define the next email address." The Examiner takes the position that it is unclear "where this 'next email address' is generated, received from, or otherwise disseminated in order to determine this "next email address." Office Action, page 6. Additionally, the Examiner asserts that "the next email address" has insufficient antecedent basis. Office Action, p. 6.

As discussed above, independent claims 39 and 40 recite a route having "a step-by-step sequence of email addresses." This route is used by the form route manager for sending and receiving email according to the email addresses of the route. Thus, "the next email address" is determined by the form route manager and has sufficient antecedent basis.

Independent claims 39 and 40 also recite "an outbox adapted to send the email to the next email address." The Examiner takes the position that it is "unclear how the email which has a previously set recipient can be sent to the "next email address." Office Action, page 6.

As discussed above, the email passed between the form route manager and recipients can be the same email albeit with potentially different values such as the step control field, the address fields, and/or the message body. Thus, the outbox can send the same email to multiple email addresses including the next email address, where the email has different values when sent to the various email addresses.

The Applicant respectfully submits that the various claim recitations discussed above are clear. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, of claims 39-41 be withdrawn.

The Claims are Patentable over Project 2000

Claims 32 and corresponding dependent claims 33-38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §

102(b) as being anticipated by *Project 2000*. *Project 2000* discloses a user interface of a project

management system that allows a user to manage a project schedule. As discussed during the

interview, *Project 2000*, however, fails to disclose or suggest a "route being an automatically

generated step-by-step sequence of email addresses," as recited in amended independent claim

32. Rather, a user of *Project 2000* is required to manually "fill in the names of the recipients"

and "modify the order in which the recipients will receive" the email. *Project 2000*, pg 509.

More specifically, in *Project 2000*, the route is manually entered and determined by the user.

Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that, for at least the reason above, the

rejection of claim 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn. Additionally, the Applicant

respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 33-38 be withdrawn for at least the reason that

they depend from claim 32.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed or rendered moot. The

Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently

outstanding rejections. The Applicant believes that a full and complete response has been made

to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for

allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that further personal communication will

expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at
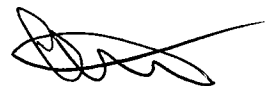
the number provided. Prompt and favorable consideration of this application is respectfully requested.

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